



Kinnikinnick Chapter of The Idaho Native Plant Society

Carol Jenkins, President, 206 N. 4th Ave. PMB 162, Sandpoint, ID 83864; president@nativeplantsociety.org

www.nativeplantsociety.org

January 18, 2008

President

Carol Jenkins
(208) 265-9204

Vice-President

Jim Stern
(208) 265-6733

Secretary

Konrad Dahlstrom
(208) 266-1107

Treasurer

Ken Haag
(208) 255-4413

Arboretum Manager

Sylvia M. Chatburn
(208) 263-2175

Founder

Lois Wythe
(208) 263-8038

Board Members

Adrienne Lilly
(208) 265-0693

Janice DeBaun
(208) 263-8970

Dennis Rieger
(208) 263-5947

Nancy Fontaine
(208) 255-7748

Kevin G. Davis
Hydrologic Technician
Avalanche Center - Director
Sandpoint RD - IPNF
1500 Hwy 2, Federal Building
Sandpoint, ID. 83864

The Kinnikinnick Chapter of the Idaho Native Plant Society would like to submit some general comments on the Lightning Creek Restoration Project. We wish to receive both paper and compact disc copies of the EA and decision for this project.

We support the project goals of reducing erosion and sedimentation in waterways. We encourage eliminating both problems to the extent that they are human caused. History shows that this drainage is subject to periodic flooding and any infrastructure in it needs to be respectful of this and designed to successfully resist flooding without causing erosion or adding to the sediment load.

Both erosion and sedimentation cause significant harm to native plants and their habitats. The Lightning Creek Drainage is the wettest drainage in Idaho, and as such is prime habitat for a range of sensitive plant species that merit strong protections. We ask that an extensive botanic inventory be part of this project and that project outcomes be very protective. Study of road realignment options should take into careful account wetlands, erosion and weed introduction and spread.

On the East Fork Road to Trail conversion where the BIG washout is located (at about 1.7 miles) the new stream bank comes right up to -- within a foot or so of -- a small wetland area created by what looks like an old beaver pond. It appears challenging to make a motorized trail here that would not impact this wetland. Even snowmobile use over such a sensitive spot could be potentially very damaging from compaction with consequences for both the vegetation and hydrology. We are concerned about this specific spot and its treatment.

We strongly request a wetlands analysis and botanical assessment of the proposed trail 134 corridor prior to any trail construction in the Rattle Creek area.

We ask that all replanting be with locally generated native plants.

One of the clear threats to native plant habitats in North Idaho is invasive, exotic weeds. They are brought in especially by logging, construction, fill material and ongoing use by motorized vehicles and to some extent by nonmotorized recreation. Sadly, once weeds are introduced, efforts to eradicate them fail. Reducing road density is essential in curtailing the spread of weeds. Effective steps to inhibit off-road activities are also critical to weed control.

If the Forest Service chooses to mine fill material locally, we ask that you assure that the mine site is rehabilitated and replanted so it does not become a sea of weeds, as has happened elsewhere. Sources of fill material that would introduce weeds to the dump site should also be avoided.

With climate change, the models used to estimate future flooding risks and the patterns of snow melt may underestimate future event strength. It is important to err on the side of protection, as the future may be more damaging. Actions taken now should aim to produce long term botanic health for the Lightning Creek Drainage.

Sincerely,

Molly O'Reilly
Conservation committee chair